Exclusive: "Suppressed" Red Cross Reports on POW Killings, Page 2

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Formosan Flea and Chinese Elephant

Only the ultra-respectable Washington Star told the truth about John Foster Dulles's first address as Secretary of State. The Star spoke of his "gross oversimplification and wishful thinking." The prize example was his hint that Eisenhower "will find the ways" to make the enemy "change his mind" about Korea and Indo-China. The remark tantalized Capitol Hill. When Dulles met two days later with Congressional leaders of both parties just before he left for Europe, he revealed what the new Administration had in mind. Next day the news leaked. The wraps were to be taken off Chiang.

The notion that the Korean war can be ended by "sicking" the Formosan flea on the Chinese elephant reflects an exuberant childishness for which the older hands of the State Department must blush. Only a few weeks ago the Brookings Institution, scholarly arm of American conservatism, published a book on the Formosan problem by Joseph W. Ballantine, long Director of the Department's Office of Far Eastern Affairs, and as ideologically impeccable as a D.A.R. soirée. Ballantine permitted himself an astringent footnote on the delusions so soon to turn up in the thinking of the new Administration.

The assumption, Ballantine wrote, "that Chiang Kai-shek is ready and eager to take his legions to fall upon the Chinese Communists and is being restrained from doing so only by the interposition of the U. S. Seventh Fleet would be fallacious". Ballantine said Chiang did not have the resources for an amphibious invasion of the mainland and declared "there is nothing in Chiang's past record to suggest that he would embark on such an undertaking unless his venture were substantially underwritten by the United States or the United Nations or both". Air and sea raids on a hit-and-run basis "could produce no decisive results", Ballantine warned. "Their chief effect would be to intensify Chinese Communist hostility to their authors and drive the Chinese people, especially those suffering from the raids, into the arms of the Communists".

The way in which Eisenhower unveiled the new policy to Congress was no doubt regarded by its authors as devilishly clever. The new President said he was "issuing instructions that the Seventh Fleet no longer be employed to shield Communist China". After that sentence, one half expected to hear that we were also shutting off Marshall Plan aid to Mao Tse-tung. The effort to make public opinion swallow such feeble stuff must add a slight nausea to the general alarm.

Several days before the President's message, Chiang's representative in the United Nations made a fiery speech saying "give us the tools" for "an independent offensive" against the "puppet regime on the mainland", but he cooled off very quickly once permission came. "Invasion by Chiang Held Not Imminent" was the New York Times headline over a new interview with that same Dr. T. F. Tsiang, and the news from Formosa was in the same key.

It must be remembered that the Korean war was immediately advantageous for Chiang because it diverted northward the troops the Communists had prepared for the invasion of Formosa. He has no wish to divert them back again. Chiang has opposed a cease-fire in Korea on the ground that this would merely encourage "new Red aggression" elsewhere. The "elsewhere" he fears is Formosa. What he wanted was to send a token force to Korea, with which he could buy himself a full place in the Western alliance and commit it to war against Communist China. There is no reason to believe he is anxious to expose his Formosan base to attack in order to end the war further North which was his salvation in 1950 and remains his last hope of a free ride back to power.

From the standpoint of our own forces in Korea, even large scale attacks on the mainland from Formosa would not be enough to change the situation on the 38th Parallel and the Yalu. The Chinese have been mobilized and equipped since 1950 to the point where they can maintain the Korean stalemate and still defend their coastal areas. We are pointing a popgun at Peiping's head. The new policy offers a maximum of provocation with a minimum of real annoyance to the enemy. As psychological warfare, it may be effective, indeed is already proving effective, but in the wrong places. Everywhere in Asia and Europe it has upset our friends.

The Japanese are happy to do the profitable business the Korean war has brought them, but have no wish to be engulfed in a widened conflict. The Burmese are afraid the new policy may encourage the unwelcome Nationalists on their territory to raid across the Chinese border. The Indians and Indonesians have feared from the beginning that American power would gradually be committed to reconquering China for Chiang.

The utmost candor on foreign policy is promised by Dulles and Eisenhower, but the key question was left unanswered. "Members of Congress," the Associated Press reported after the State of the Union address, "were greatly interested to learn what would be the use, if any, of the 7th Fleet, in the event the Chinese Communists attacked Formosa". Western Europe will be less patient than Congress in demanding the answer. Churchill has already done some premonitory grumbling about the folly of leading U. S. and UN armies into wandering endlessly about in the vast expanse of China. Here Bevan and Churchill see eye to eye.

Everywhere in Western Europe neutralism and fear of American rashness will be intensified. The blackmail implicit in the Dulles-Stassen tour of inspection will add to the growing strain on the Atlantic Alliance, on whose breakdown Stalin counts. The errors of the new American policy are so consistent as to appear calculated. One could almost suspect that under the Republicans the Communists really had infiltrated the State Department.

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"Suppressed" Red Cross Reports on POW Disorders

The United Nations Command in Tokyo on January 29 released a five page statement and a 50-page intelligence report charging that riots in which more than 200 prisoners of war were killed in UN camps last year had been "deliberately planned and master-minded" by the top Communist armistice negotiators.

Similar charges had been made before but never in so official and formal a manner. It was the first time that responsibility for the disorders had been pinned directly on Gen. Nam Il, the senior Communist representative at the truce talks, and his deputy, Gen. Lee Sang Cho.

The charges may be intended to lay a basis for calling off the truce talks altogether, and for full-scale resumption of the war, perhaps on a wider basis than before. The cabled news summaries from Tokyo were sensational but tantalizingly vague. Until the release and the intelligence report are made available in full text, judgment must be suspended.

But the charges would be more credible if it were not for the fact that representatives of the Red Cross investigated these disorders on the spot last year and made a series of reports. In these the UN Command was criticized for mishandling and mistreating prisoners of war.

That there had been a series of such investigations and reports was disclosed only recently, when the International Committee of the Red Cross published two volumes of documents in Geneva on "The Korean Conflict". They appeared last December. A copy has just been obtained by this weekly from the Red Cross in Geneva after the editor's curiosity was piqued by an obscure press release put out by the State Department on December 22.

This was the second time in little more than half a year that Red Cross material bearing on the actual conditions surrounding POW camp disorders has been published in Geneva but effectively suppressed insofar as public opinion in the United States is concerned. The first occasion was last May when Reuters briefly reported that the April issue of the *Revue Internationale de la Croix Rouge* in Geneva had carried the report of a Red Cross inquiry into the "incident" of February 18 last on Koje Island. At that time one American soldier and 69 Korean POW's were killed, and 142 prisoners injured.

The editor of this weekly translated the Red Cross report from the French original and published the full text in his column in the New York Daily Compass last May 27 after his attention was called to it by an item in the London Diary of the *New Statesman and Nation* for May 24. That report on the Koje Island killings of February 18 and the two new volumes make it difficult to believe that the POW disorders were simply a Communist plot.

Another obstacle lies in the nature of the prisoners involved in the February 18 affair. Document No. 238 dated December 27, 1951, reports to the Red Cross "certain confidential information received . . . from the Department of the Army of the United States". Investigation of prisoners had "thus far disclosed the presence of 37,500 persons whose detention is attributable to various accidental circumstances attendant upon the confusion of hostilities and who were inaccurately classified as prisoners of war". These were almost entirely South Koreans. "They have been reclassified," the report to the Red Cross said, "as civilian internees and are segregated in camps distinct and apart from the prisoners of war".

If disorders were due solely to Communist fanatics in secret touch with the Communist command, one would not expect trouble with South Koreans accidentally captured in the war. But as a matter of fact the worst disorder, that of February 18, occurred in camps on Koje holding these very same "civilian internees".

The report published by the Red Cross last May after the February killings said that some of these internees had asked to be sent back to North Korea after the armistice and that the camp authorities thereupon ordered a new screening. A camp trusty told the Red Cross delegates that the internees "would not allow themselves to be questioned anew, alleging that pressure had been brought to bear on them during their first interrogation". The Red Cross delegates warned the commander against an attempt to rescreen by force. The killings occurred when armed troops moved into the camp without warning at 4 a.m. on February 18 in an effort to force each of these "civilian internees" to be rescreened individually. According to the camp trusty, the internees were "seized with fear, thinking they were all going to be killed. The internees went out to defend themselves and to see what was going on. The troops attacked them, using their arms".

That interrogations were not always peaceful efforts to poll the opinions of prisoners is indicated by the first Red Cross complaints recorded in the new volumes. Document No. 220 dated November 19, 1951, is a letter to the State Department enclosing copies of reports on visits by Red Cross delegates to six different POW camps. The texts of the reports themselves are not given but the letter refers to "the serious and regrettable incidents" in them. The letter calls attention among other things to "ill-treatment of POW during interrogation by Republic of Korea guards".

The Red Cross delegates seemed to acquire a poor opinion of the Korean guards employed in the POW camps. Document No. 341 dated March 13, 1952, refers to an incident of February 13 "where according to the statement of the Enclosure Commander a ROK-guard posted outside Compound 76 killed a POW inside the Compound using his firearm without any serious reason" and says this "shows once more the danger of serious incidents between ROK-guards and POW's." It is suggested that ROK guards not be used in handling Communist POW's and that "Katusas" (apparently some kind of Korean guards) "who are unable to refrain themselves from provoking incidents" should be transferred.

Document No. 349 dated May 12, 1952, is an aide memoire from the Red Cross to the American consul general in Geneva dealing with the "grave occurrences" in Camp No. 1 on Koje-do on March 13 and April 10 when prisoners were killed. The Red Cross says, "In the dual circumstances it appears that the firing constitutes a violation of Article 42 of the Geneva convention of 1949". The Red Cross made two recommendations. One was that South Koreans be withdrawn as guards.

The other recommendation throws none too complimentary a light on the "political education" of POWs in the UN camps. The Red Cross asked "Avoidance of political demonstrations of any kind, and in particular of the continuance of the political program of the C.I.E. for the education of prisoners of war". The document adds, "Political questions do not in general concern the International Committee of the Red Cross, but it thought it should raise the present issue in view of its humanitarian aspects, political activities being a constant source of incidents".

Serious charges against the UN Command in handling sick POW's in a hospital compound are made in Document No. 351, dated May 24, 1951. This is a memorandum to the commander in chief of the UN forces. It declares "the withholding of food and water from the Prisoners of War in three hospital compounds of UN POW Enclosure No. 10 constitutes an infringement of article 26 of the Geneva convention" which forbids "collective disciplinary measures affecting food". The Red Cross memo adds, "The infringement is all the more serious as this measure was applied to hospital patients (post-operative cases, tuberculosis cases, mental cases and amputees)".

More drastic measures seem also to have been employed. "Furthermore," the memo continues, "concussion grenades were used against patients in compound No. 3 . . . which caused at least one death and several wounded". The memo insists that the Geneva convention requires "the most humane methods when dealing with hospital patients" and ends "Therefore the Chief of the delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross has the honor to request from the Commander in Chief to refrain in future from making use of coercive measures of the kind mentioned above."

The reply from General Mark W. Clark is given in Document No. 353, dated June 12, 1952. The prisoners in the hospital compounds are accused of flagrantly defying orders. The denial of food and water to the rebellious is defended as "a much more lenient step than . . . the immediate application of armed force". When force proved necessary "only tear gas and concussion grenades" were used and "the relatively few casualties incurred is highly indicative of the efficient manner in which our disciplined troops conducted this action".

At this point the Communist plot theory made its debut. "It has become increasingly evident," General Clark went on, "that such incidents, deliberately planned by hard-core Communist leaders, have been designed solely to embarrass the United Nations Command and to affect current armistice negotiations". The theory recalls the familiar one which makes its appearance when pickets are beaten in strikes. How often it is implied that the strikers deliberately went and got themselves beaten up in order to embarrass the police!

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Atomic Crisis

Washington, D. C.

The Trumans are a long-lived family and the ex-President in his sixties is developing into the nation's foremost *enfant terrible.* His offhand statement that he is not convinced the Russians have the atom bomb was the biggest explosion here in Washington since Hiroshima. If intended as psychological warfare, it was magnificent. The Russians must figure that any government Macchiavellian enough to pretend to act as goofily as the American government does must be up to super-sinister tricks.

Those of us who know official Washington's capacity for confusion will wonder. The original White House announcement in September, 1949, spoke of an atomic explosion. General Groves who was head of the A-bomb project during the war chimes in to say that nuclear explosions in Russia do not prove "they have the bomb in a workable form". Mr. Truman's actual words were "I am not convinced the Russians have achieved the know-how to put the complicated mechanism together to make the A-bomb work". He added, pointedly, "nobody knows anything about it".

In a rationally organized world, the possibility that the Russians do not yet have the bomb in full workable form would be seized on as occasion for another attempt to outlaw the device before we and they blow ourselves to smithereens. But in the U. S. as now organized, Mr. Truman's remark must have seemed terrifyingly dangerous to a large number of important people. It might almost be said, as it was said of God, that if there is no Russian atomic bomb, it will be necessary to invent one.

The American vested interest in a Russian atomic bomb is large. Thousands of American jobs and careers now depend upon it. Almost three billion dollars in the new budget is allocated to the manufacture of the A-bomb and its successor, the H-bomb. Nobody knows how many billions more are being spent on planes to deliver the bomb, naval carriers to deliver the planes, FBI men to guard the secret and baksheesh for the natives of such primitive areas as Morocco and Britain in which we have established atomic bases.

The political and financial consequences which would follow on the discovery that the Russians do not have the bomb after all are too terrible to contemplate. As a measure of precaution we suggest that our most hush-hush counter-espionage apparatus be alerted at once for its most daring mission. The security of the United States, indeed of the whole free world, men, now depends on delivering the secret, with sample and blueprint at Stalin's door.

One for The Voice of America

While we're on the subject, the new administration could win no greater political victory than by granting clemency to the Rosenbergs. In Eastern Europe, commutation of sentence broadcast by the Voice of America would provide a striking contrast to the trials in which so many Communists are being tried on the charge that (like the Rosenbergs) were of "bourgeois Jewish" origin. In Western Europe, clemency would demonstrate that the U. S. was still capable of just, humane and moderate action even where the A-bomb is concerned.

Whatever else one may think about the trial and the verdict, there can be no doubt among civilized men that the sentence was barbarous. The motives of the American government in commuting the sentence would be distorted by hostile propaganda, as magnanimity is always misrepresented by one's enemies. But in the long run no calumny could mar the shining serenity of such an action.

Those Diabolic Doctors

We strongly endorse the appeal made by Dr. Aryeh L. Kubovy, recently declared persona non grata as Israeli Minister to Czechoslovakia and Poland, that physicians throughout the Western world ask the Soviet government to permit foreign observers to be present at the forthcoming public trial of the nine doctors recently arrested in Moscow. The charges on their face are too hideous to be credible; melodrama sometimes occurs in real life but is properly suspect until fully proven. The trial must shame and hurt the Jews of the Soviet world, whatever its motives. Those of us who are friends of the Soviet Union and fight for the rights of Communists have a right to demand that foreign medical and legal experts be allowed to attend. The Nazis even allowed foreign counsel to participate in the Leipzig trial. The Soviet Union owes it to itself and to the world socialist movement at least to allow *qualified and independent foreign observers.*

Before some of my readers fly off the handle about this suggestion, I ask them in all honesty to look again at the Rosenberg case. The trial and its atmosphere were far from fair but the Rosenbergs had counsel of their own, were not subject to torture for the extraction of confessions, were allowed to communicate with their friends. Despite the anti-Communism of the American government, Communists were allowed to organize and agitate freely for the Rosenbergs, even to picket the White House without being molested. We independents of the Left still smart from the arrogant and high-handed way Anna Louise Strong was branded a spy without proof after a lifetime of service to the world working class, and cast out of Moscow like a dog. The case against the doctors is too much to swallow without some inpendent means of checking the procedure and the verdict. The implications and repercussions for the Jews of Eastern Europe are too serious for silence. The Soviet Union owes it to itself and to its friends to demonstrate that this is a real case, and not a frame-up.

Thank You, Daniel Webster

We can say of ourselves much as Daniel Webster said of his alma mater in the famous Dartmouth College case, "It is only a small paper, sir, but there are those who love it". (There are also, we suspect, those who will denounce it alternate issues, when one of their own sacred cows has its tootsies stepped upon). We passed 6,000 circulation with the third issue, but need a few thousand more to be comfortable and to expand a bit. As a pepper-upper we offer a free copy of my forthcoming book, "The Truman Era", with every two subscriptions. The book is a collection of my best pieces from PM, the New York Star and the Compass during the post-war years and will sell at $3.50. Those who would rather can buy it through the Weekly in advance of publication at $2 a copy, or get a one year subscription and the book for $6.

I. F. Stone

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Counter Offensive for Civil Liberty

One happy by-product of the Republican victory was the displacement of Pat McCarran as chairman of the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee by William Langer of North Dakota, the only Republican who fought to uphold President Truman's veto of the McCarran Internal Security Act. This battle-scarred veteran of the old Non-Partisan League, who campaigned for La Follette in 1924, is the relic of heroic days in the history of American progressivism and may yet play a great role as the defender of fundamental American principles in these critical years. Langer dramatized the significance of his succession to the Judiciary chairmanship by picking the conference in New York last week-end of the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee for his first public speech since the election.

The speech made news. Senator Langer announced that he was implementing a forgotten provision of the La Follette-Monroney Act of 1946, giving the Judiciary Committee exclusive jurisdiction in the field of civil liberties. He disclosed that he had appointed a civil liberties subcommittee with himself as chairman. The other members will be Dirksen of Illinois and Hendrickson of New Jersey from the Republican side, with Kefauver of Tennessee and Hennings of Missouri from the Democratic side. The Senate Judiciary Committee, which concentrated on destroying civil liberty under McCarran, will now provide a vehicle for defending civil liberty, the first Senate committee of the kind since the pre-war La Follette Civil Liberties Committee.

Last week-end's conference was also made memorable by one of the rare public appearances of Alexander Meiklejohn. The emergence for the occasion of the distinguished educator and philosopher, who has been living in retirement in California, was a moral and political victory for the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, the best answer to the attacks upon it by George Counts and the American Committee for Cultural Freedom. Dr. Meiklejohn took the offensive on a philosophical plane. His target was a passage in Mr. Justice Frankfurter's concurring opinion in the Dennis case, upholding the conviction of the top leadership of the Communist party under the Smith Alien and Sedition Act.

The passage which drew Dr. Meiklejohn's fire was that in which Mr. Justice Frankfurter cited the words in which an earlier Supreme Court in Robertson vs. Baldwin disparaged and subtly nullified the Bill of Rights. The Court said the first ten amendments "were not intended to lay down any novel principles of government, but simply to embody certain guarantees and immunities which we had inherited from our English ancestors". This interpretation is as ancient as it is noxious. In relying upon it Mr. Justice Frankfurter lined himself up with the Federalist judges who expounded it during the Alien and Sedition period of the 1790's.

This view is historically inaccurate. The England of the time had an Established Church; its common law subjected freedom of speech and press to the onerous restrictions of seditious libel and constructive treason; its Parliament unlike Congress was and is supreme. From the English point of view not only the First Amendment but the treason provisions of the Constitution and its restrictions on legislative power were novel and revolutionary. The point is more than a distant abstraction, and was worth the gifts of exposition and scholarship Dr. Meiklejohn expended upon it. For the doctrine revived by Mr. Justice Frankfurter would cloak with a spurious intellectual respectability the drive to allow Congress to restrict freedom of speech, press and assembly, though the First Amendment clearly says Congress may not abridge them.

The fight being waged by the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee is the same fight the Jeffersonians waged more than a century and a half ago on precisely the same constitutional issue. They won then. We are not yet defeated today. The high calibre of the men who took part in the panels and the character of the discussion from the floor were inspiring. Among the thousand persons who attended were people from as far off as the State of Washington. The fact that they came so far in so difficult a period, despite smear attack, showed that the libertarian spirit is far from dead in this country. It is no small reward and no weak sustenance to feel, as those who participated must, that on us few, weak and inadequate as we may be, rests the fate of the traditions which have made our country great in the eyes of all mankind in the past. Such handfuls of men have determined the course of history before and can again. There will be another conference in March to speed organization at the grass roots, on a community level.

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